

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
April 29, 1999 – Sheboygan

Notes

(prepared by Bill Horns, April 30, 1999)

Present: Steve Hogler, Terry Lychwick, Bill Horns, Mike Toney, Brad Eggold, Brian Belonger, Pradeep Hirethota, Jim Moore, Ron Fassbender, Matt Coffaro, Gus Ernst, Tom Hansen, Paul Peeters, Mark Opgenorth, Jim Francis.

DECISION/ACTION ITEMS

- 1) The next LMFT meeting will be in Sturgeon Bay on Thursday and Friday, July 8-9.
- 2) Disposition of surplus coho salmon. The Team recommends stocking the 20-25,000 surplus yearling cohos in SER. The development of a general policy for handling surplus fish was deferred to a later date. Probably it would be best to wait until the vacant statewide fish propagation coordinator position is filled, and work with that person.
- 3) Work planning/budgeting. Two issues were raised, 1) the possibility that some of the project cost figures used by the review committee for projects in the "Great Waters Ecological Information" category include contributions by partners and 2) the need to be sure that in the "Great Lakes" sub-category the nearshore rainbow trout project is retained, at least as a place holder, to assure that possible future time commitments are accounted for. We agreed to the following: 1) Jim Moore and Jim Francis will review proposed funding and identify projects where the requested state funding differs from the figure we have been working with. 2) Steve Hogler will develop new cost figures for the rainbow trout project. 3) I will convene a conference-call meeting of the review committee to consider changes to the committee's previous recommendations in light of the new information and to formalize a recommendation that the rainbow trout project be approved.
- 4) Naming the new boat. The LMFT recommends naming the boat *Perca*, in recognition of the primary purpose of the boat - research and assessment work related to the management of yellow perch, *Perca flavescens*.
- 5) Northern pike regulations in Green Bay. Paul will write, again, to the Pikemasters leaders to reiterate the LMFT's position.
- 6) Proposal to establish consistent regulations for walleye and northern pike in southern Lake Michigan. This rule was approved in Conservation Congress spring hearings, except in Milwaukee and Manitowoc. The LMFT reiterates its support for this rule, and recommends that the northern limit of its application be placed north of the outlet of the Manitowoc River.
- 7) Implementation of the *Lake Michigan Steelhead Fisheries Management Plan*. The LMFT endorsed the Team Steelhead proposal related to experimental stocking of rainbow trout, with minor changes. The LMFT made the following recommendations: 1) Experimentally stocked rainbow trout should be marked to identify stocking location as well as strain. 2) Brook trout stocking should be curtailed during the years of experimental rainbow trout stocking. 3) A mailing and a

single public meeting in late May or early June will be used to acquaint the public with the proposed study and to solicit public comments.

- 8) Charter boat reporting. The *Lake Michigan Integrated Fisheries Management Plan* raises the issue of inaccurate reporting of charter harvests, and Brad has pursued various approaches to the problem, but we are not gaining ground. The LMFT recommends a discontinuation of the annual charter fishing report, in its present form. A brief report capturing only the information used directly for management purposes would be produced. The question of how and when to notify charter captains of this was not settled. I think this could be a controversial decision, but it may provoke a dialogue that leads to better solutions to the problem of inaccurate reporting.
- 9) Funding for better lakewide forage surveys. A proposal to the Great Lakes Fishery Trust for funding of a cooperative state/federal acoustic forage survey was shot down at the pre-proposal level. The LMFT agreed with my proposal to, first, set up a conversation (including Mike Toney) with Charlie Wooley, Mark Holey, and others to find out what the problem is with GLFT funding of this type of project and, second, draft a letter for Mike Staggs' signature urging GLFT support for expanded acoustic work.
- 10) Status of the new boat. The bid for improvements to the new boat came in quite a bit over expectations. The boat committee (Belonger, Francis, Beilfus, and others as needed) will develop a recommendation or set of options about how to proceed from here.
- 11) Experimental marking of chinook salmon using fluorescent photonic markers. Paul will draft a letter to the GLFC regarding our plans to use this marking technique.
- 12) Cormorant control. I will clarify 1) what is happening with cormorant control proposals in NY and Vermont and 2) who is involved in a cooperative effort by USFWS, USDA, the states, and interested groups to cooperatively develop a plan to manage cormorant populations.
- 13) Problems with fishing regs pamphlet. I will ask Karl Scheidegger to share the pamphlet in draft form with the LMFT this year.
- 14) Possible rule to assure the safety of Department staff by requiring that commercial boats pass Coast Guard inspections. I will speak with Pete Flaherty about legal feasibility of this.

DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS

- 15) Bloater chub management.
- 16) Progress of the Commercial Fishing Task Force – update by Tom Hansen.
- 17) Handling of deceased steelhead at the weirs – differences in SOP between the two regions.
- 18) International symposium on the biology and management of coregonid fishes.
- 19) GLFC Coordination Activities funding.
- 20) Ed Avery's report, "Alien rainbow trout compromise native brook trout community".
- 21) Appointment of Phil Moy as the new Sea Grant fisheries specialist in Manitowoc.
- 22) Elaine Johnson letter regarding allowing a commercial lake trout harvest.
- 23) GLFC solicitation of proposals regarding "Quantification of incremental (cumulative) loss of critical Great Lakes habitats".

- 24) Letters to Butterbrodt (regarding lake trout bag limits) and Soles (walleye stocking in Lake Michigan tributaries).
- 25) List of software exemptions.
- 26) Kevin Naze's request for material for "Wild About Water".
- 27) June or September information item presentation to NRB regarding quotas.
- 28) WF/GLSFC meeting.
- 29) Recent arrests in SER.
- 30) LMC highlights?
- 31) CLC highlights.
- 32) National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program.
- 33) Sea lamprey attachment rates in SER.
- 34) IPN update.

These meeting notes are not intended to provide a full summary of all discussions, but to relay essential information, record all LMFT decisions, and remind the Team of work commitments that were made at the meeting. Our next meeting will be in Sturgeon Bay on Thursday and Friday, July 8-9.